

# Southern California Watershed Alliance

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As the executive director of the Southern California Watershed Alliance I am responding to the Draft Programmatic CALFED EIS/EIR. Representing watersheds from the Santa Ynez River to the Tijuana River, the Southern California Watershed Alliance has both very specific and general comments with concerns of the long-term impact on the entire State with this programmatic approach. Recognizing the scale, scope and time that have gone into this document, we nevertheless feel that there are problems with response. By not having a public hearing- from Salinas to Pasadena and only a weeknight- and with problems with obtaining both the printed materials and functional electronic versions make it difficult for these interested parties in the northern part of our region to comment. While most of our region depends on imported water, we want you to know of the successes of our watershed programs and how that could help the Bay-Delta. Hopefully this can be an ongoing dialog, with meetings in our part of the State, even after the comment period ends.

We would hope that money would be available for our watershed programs as part of the first phase or 7 years to help prove what we have and can do on a local level. With the water bond and a parks bond potentially going on the ballot next year, we want to be part of the solution. The two votes of the people on water issues, the peripheral canal defeat and proposition 204, have proved the public's interest in local solutions. We have faced the future in our approach to the last drought and have prepared for the next drought with regional programs like the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority. Rather than make a 30 year plan, without all the necessary information, we urge you to phase the program in with money going to these common programs: Watersheds, Water Efficiency, Ecosystem Restoration, and practical, local Water Quality Programs- first.

Increased efficiency in Southern California has offset our population increases in the last 20 years. To maintain this success CALFED needs to make water use efficiency programs mandatory for both AG and urban sectors to create equity across the solution area. Funding must be available up-front, as our largest wholesaler, MWD of SC, through restructuring, is relying on local agencies to provide programs. The efficiency programs here have worked with wholesaler participation and partnerships with community based organizations. The draft document, in 7.14 states that Environmental Justice issues only apply to rural farmworkers. We contend that not only are urban minority communities part of the EJ issue, they are part of the solution.

Finally, it is hard to comment on a programmatic program without both good baseline data and a water budget. This is what we are faced with in Southern California Watersheds, with population growth and even steelhead restoration. It has to be the first step. We can only hope that these decisions are made with full participation and look forward to your response and continued interaction.

Thank you,



Conner Everts

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